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CBS Producer Criticizes Westmoreland Program

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ALBANY, N.Y., May 3—CBS may have "pushed too hard" in its 1982 documentary that accused Gen. William C. Westmoreland of suppressing accurate estimates of enemy troop strength in Vietnam, the producer of the broadcast said today.

While the documentary was factually accurate, if he had it to do over again, CBS producer George Crile said he would try to include more of the context in which Westmoreland was operating while U.S. commander in Vietnam.

Crile made the remarks before a regional conference of the Radio-

Television News Directors Association.

"It's clear the president [Lyndon B. Johnson] wanted good news and was going to beat up anybody who didn't provide it," Crile said. "Gen. Westmoreland was a patriot. He was trying to win the war. He was presumably acting in good faith. In a sense, I think we pushed too hard."

Crile produced the 1982 CBS documentary, "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception." The broadcast said Westmoreland, commander of American troops in Vietnam from 1964 to 1968, insisted that intelligence reports show no more than 300,000 communist

troops in the field, despite evidence pointing to a figure in excess of 500,000. Westmoreland feared the higher figures would undermine political support for the war, the broadcast said.

Westmoreland dropped his \$120 million libel suit Feb. 18 following an 18-week trial in U.S. District Court in Manhattan. CBS, in its only apparent concession, agreed not to try to force him to pay its court costs and legal fees.

The outcome of the trial produced no elation, Crile said, in part because of "the human factor of sitting near Gen. Westmoreland" in court and sharing the experience of being covered by the press.